

Games

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Games

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Games (A Post "Fuzzy Logic" Scene) by Beth Arritt Copyright 1998

Nikita threw the milk carton in the trash, disgusted with herself. She couldn't help but be glad to be rid of the reminder of her part in the disappearance of Greg Hillinger. Yet at the same time, she'd only kept it as a reminder of what she had become. A year ago, she had run from Section, not caring if she died because of it. Now they trusted her enough to use her to lure a kid into a life with Section. They knew how she felt about this sort of thing, but knew she'd do her job regardless.

What did that say about her? She'd vowed long ago that she'd rather die than let them turn her into a carbon copy of Michael, or God forbid, Madeline. Now she was learning to hide her every emotion, feeling and motivation, just like Michael.

A week ago, a new recruit looked at her the same way Nikita had often looked at Michael. A confused look, as if he wasn't sure if she was hiding her true feelings, or just pretended to have them when it suited her purposes. It bothered her a little, that people were starting to think she was cold-blooded and ruthless, but at the same time it served her well in her world. The more they thought she'd cut

off her emotions, the less she would be watched. And any mental side effects from acting this way she could deal with on her own.

She was on her way to the shower when there was a knock at the door. For a moment, she stood on the step, trying to decide if she really wanted to answer, but she knew she had no choice. A knock at this hour most likely meant one person. And not answering wouldn't make him go away.

She opened the door just enough to see who it was, annoyed, but not at all surprised to see Michael on the other side. "Something wrong with your phone?"

He glanced over her shoulder at the rest of her apartment, searching for guests, then turned his gaze back to her. "Can I come in?"

"It's late, and I was just about to take a shower." *And I'm too tired to play your mind games tonight,* she finished to herself.

"I'll only be a moment," he continued as he leaned forward slightly, putting a little of his weight on the door.

She sighed and gave in, knowing it was no use to refuse. He'd make it inside somehow. "Fine."

He walked in and looked around, checking the room as he always did. She wondered briefly if he even did that in his own home. "I heard you had a breech a couple of weeks ago. You've had no recurrances?"

"No, and I don't expect any. I took care of the situation by the book, so what's the problem?"

"No problem, I just wanted to make sure you were safe here." He scanned the room again, but made no move to leave.

"Now that I've reassured you, is there anything else, or can I go take my shower?"

He walked around the bar, like a cat stalking an area, looking for weaknesses. Or maybe for a reason to stay; she never could tell with him. She remembered the milk carton a split second before he reached the trash can, and she knew the moment his eyes spotted it that it had fallen with Greg's face where Michael could see it. "Madeline says that Hillinger is adjusting nicely. He's enjoying himself with the new computer equipment."

"Good for him." Not that it made up for having his life taken away from him, or the fact that his mother would be looking for him forever, never giving up hope that he'd be found. True, he'd done it to himself, but he hadn't known just what he was getting himself into before it was too late.

Nikita rubbed the back of her neck, wishing Michael would just go away so she wouldn't have to think. All she wanted was a shower and sleep. "Is there anything else?" she tried again.

"No. I can see that you're fine." She wondered briefly if he meant

about the breech in her cover, or about the kid she'd help shackle to Section for the rest of his life, then decided it didn't matter. Or it shouldn't matter. She shouldn't care whether he was concerned about her at all, much less why. Unfortunately, when it came to the trick of turning off her emotions, the Michael switch was more hidden from her than all the rest of them combined.

She realized that he'd moved from the far side of the bar and was standing next to her at the front door. "I'll see you tomorrow." She nodded silently as he walked out and she locked the door behind him. For a moment, she stood there, eyes closed, wishing she lived in a simpler world. Then she opened her eyes turned toward the bathroom without looking back.

End
file.